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The best form of atomizer is the long, plated, reversible tube; it should be worked with a gum elastic pipe, having two bulbs to secure uniformity in the current. The atomizing glass tubes and the bottle which usually accompany the apparatus are unnecessary: a common narrow-necked two ounce bottle will serve perfectly to hold the fluid.

I trust that the use of the means here indicated may render the preservation of insect collections less troublesome than heretofore, and thus increase the interest of amateurs who frequently become disgusted with the science of entomology, by seeing the results of years of active and intelligent labor destroyed by a few months of inattention, or by carelessness in introducing infected specimens.



A TRUE STORY OF A PET BIRD.*

BY ROBERT RIDGEWAY.



WHILE attached, during the past year, in Nevada, to the U. S. Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel, under Mr. Clarence King, I had a pet bird of the species known as the Arkansas Flycatcher (*Tyrannus verticalis*), which is closely related to the common Kingbird or Bee Martin in form, but differs in having the back olive gray, and the under parts yellow, except the throat, which is ashy. It is to be met with over the entire western portion of the United States, from the high plains west of the Missouri River to the Pacific, and in the vicinity of settlements is well known to every one.

Our pet, familiarly known to the party as "Chippy," was obtained about the middle of July, from the Indians, who had just taken it with three others, all fully fledged, from the nest. We carried it to our camp near by, and fed it with

* Communicated by the Smithsonian Institution.

grasshoppers and flies until he was able to catch them for himself, which he learned to do about a week after he could fly. The little fellow appeared to be always hungry, and during the day followed me about, continually teasing me for grasshoppers until he had eaten enough, after which he would remain quietly upon my shoulder, or my hat, or fly off to his favorite perch—a rope running from the top of the tent to a stake in the ground. At night "Chippy" roosted upon a rope inside the tent, or frequently under an umbrella, which, for the purpose of shading a thermometer, hung at the corner outside. When wishing to go to sleep, however, he would seldom roost in these places voluntarily, but alighting upon my shoulder would hop up close to my neck and settle cosily down, and repeated removals were necessary to induce him to remain upon the perch provided for him. In the morning as I lay wrapped in my blankets, generally the first thing that awoke me would be Chippy fluttering about my head, for he would invariably select me from the dozen persons who lay around upon the ground.

Chippy soon became a general favorite, and every one fed and caressed him. First among his many peculiarities was his almost insatiable appetite, which excited the greatest wonder and comment, and many were the conjectures as to the number of good-sized grasshoppers he could dispose of in one day. It was finally agreed that this should be settled by an experiment; each person was to keep account of all he fed Chippy, and in the evening, upon comparing notes, it was found that during the day he had made away with the almost incredible number of one hundred and twenty fat grasshoppers, all however, with their legs pulled off.

Our little pet possessed scarcely a trace of timidity, and even soon learned his own name. At least, when he was wanted we had but to call "Chippy, Chippy," and he immediately appeared, even if out of our sight, joyously twittering as he approached, and alighting upon the shoulder of the person who called him. He soon began to catch insects

himself, after I had taught him by carrying him around upon my finger and placing him up close to any fly or gnat I found perched upon the wall of the tent. When fully grown he passed most of the day sitting upon the top of the tents, occasionally darting after a passing insect, or, if the weather was particularly warm, perching upon the edge of the table, or any suitable place, under the "fly" of the tent, in the shade.

Once, when starting on horseback up the mountains after birds, at about one hundred yards from camp, I was surprised to hear Chippy coming towards me, playfully twittering, when he alighted upon my shoulder and accompanied me up the cañon. Occasionally he would leave me to catch a butterfly or other insect, upon securing which he immediately returned, alighting upon my hat, against which he beat the captive until in a condition to be swallowed. Frequently on seeing other birds of his species, he would join them, and after sporting with them awhile return to his seat upon the pommel of the saddle, my shoulder or hat, his playmates following to within a few yards, when they would stop, and perching upon a dead branch curiously watch us, wondering probably why their little friend was so fearless of me. Chippy accompanied me thus some three or four miles from camp. Having proceeded as far up the cañon as possible, I there tied and unsaddled my horse; the sun being very hot, and the bird disposed to be inactive, I placed him in the shade of my saddle. I then climbed up the hillside over the rocks, until out of sight of my horse, on my way occasionally shooting a bird, and wandering some distance from where I left Chippy; but upon my return I found him following after me, having discovered my absence by the report of my gun, and started in search of me. We then returned to camp as we had left it.

Our pet bird soon began to attract others of his species to the camp which became quite familiar. They could not, however, persuade Chippy to leave us, he evidently preferring

our society to theirs. He was at first perfectly unmindful of the report of a gun, even sitting upon my shoulder when I fired, or often perching upon the gun-barrel when I carried him with me in my rambles. One day, however, wishing to secure one of these flycatchers which flew about our camp, and intending if possible to drive them away, I shot at one of three which were sporting together in the air, thinking that Chippy was sitting upon the tent; fortunately I missed the bird I shot at, which proved to be our pet, he flying in great consternation to the camp, having probably been touched by one of the shot, although not at all injured. His disregard for a gun was now at an end, and the mere picking up of this instrument of death was sufficient to cause his immediate retreat, retiring with terror depicted upon his countenance, the feathers lying close to his body, his crest elevated and neck outstretched, removing to another perch each time I advanced. The moment, however, I laid the gun aside, all his fears were over, and upon approaching him, when I reached out my hand he would hop upon my finger with perfect confidence. Although I might carry him in this way all about the camp, if I approached the gun, which leaned against the tent, he made a precipitate retreat.

We carried Chippy with us, from camp to camp, for nearly two months longer. Everywhere we went he excited the curiosity and wonder of all persons, the Indians included, and we had not the least fear of losing him. One morning, however, in the latter part of September, we missed his familiar awakening twitter, and when we arose from our blankets he could not be found. Search was made throughout the day but without success, and a large hawk having been seen early in the morning hovering about the camp seemed to explain the cause of his disappearance. He was never afterwards seen.